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KHAFRE

From the statue in diorite in the Cairo Museum

*Burud baran Munkaji.  
College Rossz taleneth*

# THE STORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

BY

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Author of "Ancient Man in Britain" "Wonder Tales of the East"  
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# THE STORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

## CHAPTER I

# The Land of the Pharaohs

The land of Egypt is a long narrow valley through which flows the River Nile. It is just a green streak of country in that vast brown desert of sand and rock and gravel which stretches across the northern part of Africa from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Red Sea on the east.

An ancient Greek writer, named Herodotus, said that "Egypt is the gift of the Nile". That is indeed true, for the great muddy river has, for many hundreds of years, been bringing down large quantities of soil and laying it on the desert. This soil is very rich and yields heavy crops.

The Nile flows for a great distance between barren hills, and at some parts the eastern side of its valley is no wider than one of our country roads. Elsewhere the hills are about twenty miles apart, and the fertile land stretches for several miles on either side of the river.

When the Nile, flowing northward, is about one hundred miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea it divides itself, and two main branches spread out, forming in the open country a triangle known as the Delta. There are a large number of small branches of the river as well.

The entire length of the Nile is about 2000 miles. Its waters are drawn from the big lakes in the middle of Africa and from the mountains of Abyssinia, and after the main streams unite near Khartoum, the Nile receives only one tributary, the Atbara.

Egypt proper stretches from the Mediterranean to Assouan, a distance of about 700 miles. The area lying to the south of that point is known as the Soudan.

We know Egypt as the ancient land in which the pharaohs ruled in times past. There Joseph, son of Jacob, was for a time a slave, but he rose to be a great man who made wise laws; his position was then like that held by a Prime Minister in our own day. There, too, Moses was born and educated; he led the children of Israel out of Egypt so that they might live in the "Land of Promise". When Christ was a baby He was taken to Egypt, and kept there for a period because the cruel king Herod had ordered that all the male children born in Palestine in the year of His birth should be put to death.

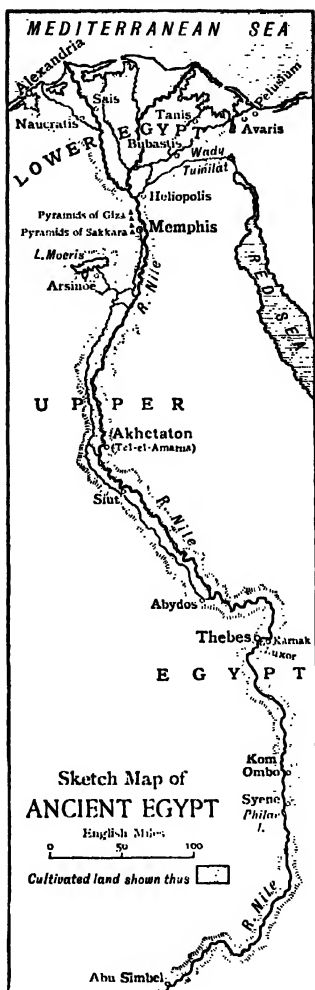
We know Egypt, too, as "the land of the pyramids". Those great monuments of stone were set up by the busy workmen of mighty pharaohs hundreds of years before the time of Joseph, and for long before these pyramids were built the Egyptian people were living in towns and villages, tilling the land and growing crops, and using boats on the River Nile.

The Nile is a very wonderful river. Each year it rises

in flood and, overflowing its banks, drenches the soil and makes it very fertile. Then the waters retreat until the river flows once again between its banks, and it sinks lower and lower until it becomes shallow and sandbanks appear in places.

In our own day a great dam has been built at Assouan to store the river water at the time of the annual flood. When the Nile is becoming low it is fed from this dam, so as to keep up the supply of water required for irrigating the farms along its banks.

In former days the river shrank greatly until it seemed scarcely to flow at all, and looked slimy and half stagnant. Islands of sand appeared. The steep banks of black mud became very dry and cracked in the great heat. The period of "Low Nile" was the hottest part of the year in Egypt.



## CHAPTER II

## Wonders of the Seasons

The Nile measured the year for the ancient Egyptians, and they divided their year into three seasons. These were "the hot season", "the flood season", and "the cool season".

During "the hot season" (March till July) the sun burns daily in a cloudless blue sky. Where the rocks are exposed to its full blaze they become so hot that they blister one's hands on touching them. It is then a comfort to walk or rest in their shadows. That is what is meant by the Bible reference to "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land".

The terrible heat makes even the Egyptians weary. The winds are very hot, and when a gale blows from the south it raises clouds of sand which darken the air and hide the sky. A sandstorm hisses and roars through the valley of the Nile, blinding one, stinging and blistering one's skin, and forcing one to seek shelter. Every green thing is smothered with desert dust. The sand drifts into houses and gets into food and clothing. After the storm passes, the parching, blistering heat remains.

At the approach of the new season cool and refreshing winds begin to blow from the north. These bring relief to Egypt, for they reduce the heat and make the evenings refreshing.

Then comes the time when the low Nile begins to rise in flood and people welcome the "new water". The river is fed at its sources by the heavy tropical rains that swell the lakes in Central Africa, and by the torrents from the

melting snow on the mountains of Abyssinia. As soon as the new water comes down, grass grows and shrubs burst into bloom.

For a few days the Nile is coloured by the masses of the minute green water-weeds, called *algæ*, that covered the upper parts of the river and pools and lakes during the "hot season". The Egyptians refer to the river in this state as the "Green Nile".

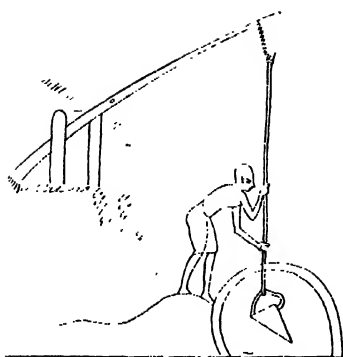
As the river rises rapidly it brings down so much clay that it turns to a reddish-brown colour. This is the "Red Nile" of the Egyptians.

Higher and higher rises the river until it begins to burst through its sandy banks and fill the canals. The waters roar and sparkle and bound over the parched soil. This is a time of great gladness in Egypt. After the terrible heat and dryness, the "new water" rushes like new life into the valley. Men, women, and children splash through the cool water as it streams across the hot sand; the dogs and cattle and sheep frisk about and are refreshed, and clouds of birds flutter and dart in search of fish washed from the river. Day by day and night by night the river rises steadily, and the floods spread and deepen in the valley until village sites become islands and men have to go out in boats to rescue cattle from shrinking banks of sand.

The "flood season" (July till October) is followed by the "cool season". As the waters shrink back, the fields are tilled and sown. The crops ripen at the beginning of the "hot season".

In ancient days the earliest farmers in Egypt saw that their land was kept fertile by the little streams flowing from the pools left after the flood. They then made channels in their fields to drench the soil, and when the





Shaduf

From a tomb painting at Thebes dating  
1550-32 B.C. (after Wilkinson)

Nile fell too low to feed them, the farm-workers raised the water from the river with the help of a very simple machine, called the "shaduf". Stakes were driven into the ground and a framework made and a pole suspended on it. One end of the pole was weighted by a big lump of dried mud or a stone, and from the other end, jutting over the river bank, a bucket

was attached by a rope. The worker drew down the bucket, dipping it in the river, and it was raised by the weight at the other end of the pole. Then the bucket was emptied into the channel so that the water might run into the field. The shaduf is still used by many Egyptian peasants. Some, however, use water-wheels to raise water from the Nile.

Rain very rarely falls in the Nile valley. In some parts there may be one shower only in three years. The irrigation of the fields—that is, supplying the channels with river water—is therefore very necessary so that the crops may flourish.

There are not many trees in Egypt. Clumps of beautiful trees may, however, be seen at Cairo, and date trees and tamarisks grow here and there elsewhere in the valley. In ancient days the sycamore fig was cultivated, but it has now vanished. The lotus bloom and the papyrus reed, so common in ancient times, have vanished also.

Egypt of itself is not very attractive, except for its mild climate during our winter season, but its relics of ancient times fascinate visitors. The pyramids, the temples, the obelisks, the statues, and the wonderful tombs cut out of rock are of great interest, for they bring us into close touch with the past. We can gaze at the statues and mummies of great Egyptians of ancient times, and with the help of inscriptions, writings, and pictures, get glimpses of ancient life in the land in which Joseph and Moses lived and which Christ visited when a little child.

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### CHAPTER III

## Early Sailors and Miners

When the ancient Egyptians began to farm in the Nile valley some of their clever men invented the Calendar. Their New Year's Day was the day when the river began to rise in flood. They divided the year into twelve moon periods (months) as we still do.

This Egyptian Calendar was first introduced about forty-two centuries before the birth of Christ. It was ultimately taken over by the Romans and altered to suit the seasons of Europe. Other alterations were afterwards made, but it is really the old Egyptian Calendar that we are still using, the names of the months having been altered. July, for instance, was called after Julius Cæsar, and August after Augustus, his successor.

Long before the great pyramids near Cairo were built, Egypt was divided into two kingdoms—the Kingdom of

Lower Egypt (the Delta region) and the Kingdom of Upper Egypt. War broke out between the two kingdoms, and Upper Egypt, after a long struggle, conquered Lower Egypt. Then one pharaoh ruled over the united kingdoms, which were called the "Two Lands".

The first pharaoh of the "Two Lands" was named Menes. He and his successors made up the First Dynasty, or reigning family. During Egypt's long history of over thirty centuries there were in all thirty dynasties.

The period before Menes is called the "pre-dynastic period". During this period, which covered several centuries, the Egyptians discovered how to grow crops and rear cattle, how to work metals, and how to build and navigate boats, and their artisans became very skilled and very industrious.

Before Menes' time Egyptian sailors ventured out on the Mediterranean Sea and visited the islands of Cyprus and Crete, and began to take timber from Lebanon on the coast of Palestine.

After copper was discovered, a colony of Egyptian miners worked copper mines in the peninsula of Sinai. These are the oldest known mines in the world, and relics of the ancient miners can still be seen. Some of their tools have been found in heaps of debris. The miners broke the rock with stone hammers and also used stone picks to get out the ore. In time strong copper chisels came into use, and the marks made by these remain on the rock faces. A number of little mines were driven into the desert rock. One must stoop on entering them, for they are not more than five feet high.

The ore was smelted beside the mines, and masses of slag still lie under the sand. In one heap of rubbish was found

a clay crucible with a spout. It was used for pouring the smelted copper into moulds. The copper was carried in bars to the Egyptian workshops.

On the rocks and on the stones in Sinai there are ancient inscriptions. One inscription was made by an official who was sent to the mines during the hot season. "It was not the time for going to this mine land," he tells; "the mountains are hot in the summer and the rocks brand the skin."

A relief carving shows three figures of an ancient pharaoh and also the figure of a desert Arab who was conquered in battle. The miners were sometimes attacked by the Arabs. Forts had to be built, and the ruins of them still remain.

The Egyptians worked gold as well as copper. They found this precious metal in the Eastern Desert between Upper Egypt and the Red Sea, where there are dry water-courses which are known as "wadis". These "wadis" were formed when Egypt was a moister country than it has been since civilization began in it.

We know that gold was worked at a very early period, for ornaments of gold have been found in graves of the First Dynasty. Before copper knives were invented the Egyptians used flint knives, and some of these, which have been discovered, have handles of gold.

One old water-course called Wadi Allagi must have been famous for its gold. All the hills surrounding it were dug to a depth of about seven feet, and a prospector tells that "they have the appearance of having been ploughed". An old gold mine, which has been located, was found to contain the skeleton of a man who had been killed by a fall of rock from its roof.

The Arab robbers attacked the gold miners as they did

the copper miners. A tablet set up by an ancient Egyptian prince tells that he went into the desert with a company of miners and 400 soldiers to get gold for the pharaoh. The soldiers protected the workers against robbers.

Besides searching for metals in the Eastern Desert and in Sinai, the Egyptians searched for them in Crete and Cyprus, where they got copper. The seafarers also brought silver from Cilicia in Asia Minor.

Metals were not the only things searched for and found. The mariners who crossed the Mediterranean found obsidian (a natural glass) on the little island of Melos in the Cyclades, and they made sharp knives and other useful things of this material. They also found on the island of Naxos large quantities of emery, which they used to polish and hollow out the hard stones from which they made vases and bowls.

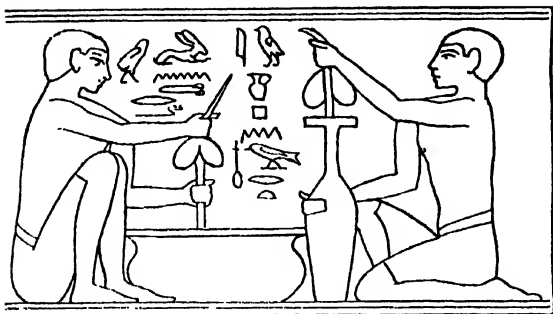
The artisans became very skilful in working not only metals, stone, and wood, but also ivory, which they carved into beautiful forms. They were very patient and very industrious, and when we examine in the museums the articles they made, we cannot help feeling that they took great pride in their work.

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## CHAPTER IV

### The First Pyramid

The Egyptians were the greatest stone-workers and builders in the ancient world. Those great stone pyramids which may be seen near Cairo are the most wonderful buildings ever constructed. They were set up during the Early Dynastic period.



Egyptian craftsmen engaged in drilling out stone vessels with crank drills

From a tomb relief. The hieroglyphics record the workmen's conversation. One says, "This is a beautiful vase", and the other replies, "It is indeed". (After de Morgan.)

Before these and other pyramids could be erected, however, the Egyptian workmen had to learn how to quarry and dress stone, and how to transport large blocks from a quarry to the site of a building.

As we have seen, they gained experience in the work of cutting rock when mining for gold and copper, and before blocks of stone were taken down the Nile in boats and on rafts, the Egyptian seafarers towed log-rafts from the coast of Syria.

An important invention came into use before 3000 B.C. This was a crank drill which was used for hollowing out stone vases and bowls. Two stone weights were suspended below the handle to keep the shaft going round. The drill point was first made of hard stone and afterwards of copper, and ground emery was used as a cutting powder. This revolving machine was the first introduction of the principle of the wheel. In the museums may be seen small and

large stone bowls and vases which were hollowed with the aid of crank drills fed with emery.

Copper saws were invented, and these were used to cut hard stone as well as wood. The copper chisel was used for dressing the surface of stone.

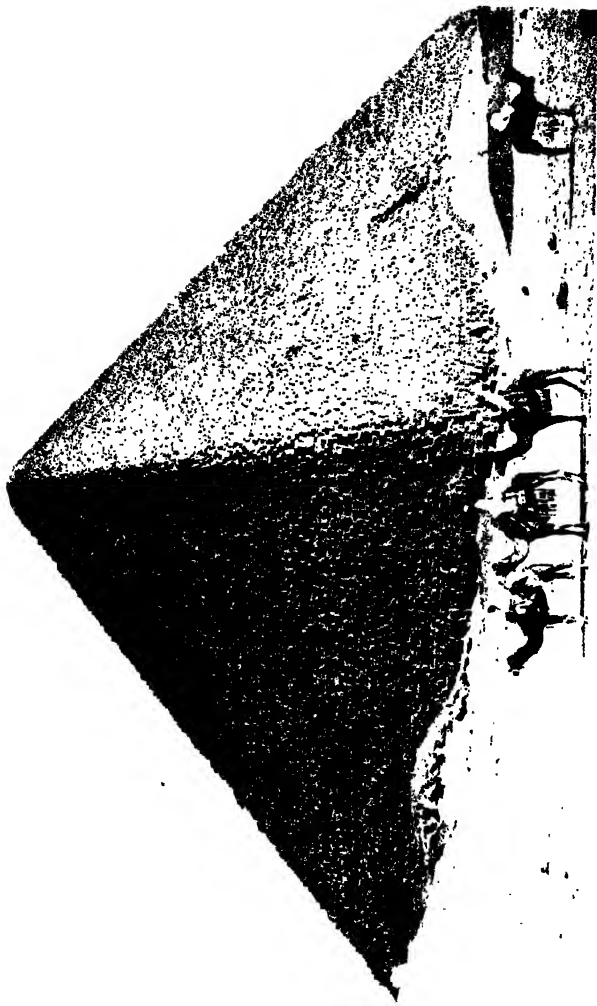
In the quarries hard stone like granite was hammered out with the aid of balls of dolerite until narrow trenches were formed. Then the undercutting was done by hammering from the trenches on the four sides of a big square block. This work was very hard, and large numbers of men were employed at it constantly for weeks and months, according to the size of the block of granite which was quarried.

After a block was cut out, it had to be removed from the quarry. It was raised by using levers and by packing it beneath with sand and wedges. Then a large number of men hauled it with ropes to the raft on which it was to be taken down the river.

Stone was first used for building in Egypt shortly before 3000 B.C. In the course of a hundred years the workers became very skilled in quarrying, dressing, and removing big blocks of stone. Then the first stone pyramid was built at Sakkara, to the south of Cairo.

A pyramid is a royal tomb, and the pharaoh for whom the first pyramid was built was named Zoser. He was the first king of the Third Dynasty, and began to reign about 2980 B.C.

The architect of the pyramid was a great man named Imhotep. He drew the plans, and decided that the pyramid should be about 200 feet high. It was erected on a series of platforms, and it is known to us as the "step pyramid".



THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHUFU

123 E. 123



## CHAPTER V

## How the Pyramids were Built

The group of three great pyramids near Cairo used to be spoken of as one of the seven wonders of the world.

It is now about fifty centuries since these vast buildings were erected. They were ancient to the Greek and Roman tourists who went to Egypt about 2000 years ago, for they were then about thirty centuries old. Even Tut-ankh-amon looked upon them as antiquities, for when he reigned they had been standing for about fifteen centuries. When Moses and Joseph gazed at the pyramids they regarded them as marvels of the past, for they were old in their time.

Modern tourists climb to the top of the pyramids with the help of the nimble native guides, and they explore the deep passages and chambers inside them just as did the tourists who lived in the time of the Roman emperors. The pyramids amaze those who visit them by their vastness and by the size of the blocks of stone with which they were built. In no other buildings in the world has everything been done on so big a scale.

The largest of the three pyramids was set up for the first pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty. His name was Khufu, which was pronounced as Cheops (*Kee'ops*) by the Greeks. He began to reign about 2900 B.C.

Near this pyramid is one slightly smaller which was built for Khufu's son, the Pharaoh Khafre whom the Greeks called Cephren. The third pyramid was built for the next pharaoh, who was called Men-ku-re in Egyptian and Mycerinus in Greek. The great sphinx near the

pyramids was carved out of a mass of rock during the reign of Pharaoh Khafre.

Khufu's pyramid covers about thirteen acres of land. It was laid out in the form of a square, one side facing the north, another the east, another the south, and another the west. Each side was originally about 755 feet long, and the building was carried up to a point about 500 feet above the level of the ground.

Herodotus, the Greek writer, was told when he visited Egypt that one hundred thousand workmen were constantly employed at this great building, and that they were relieved every three months by a fresh lot. Ten years were spent in levelling the ground and making other preparations, and the work of building the pyramid itself occupied twenty years.

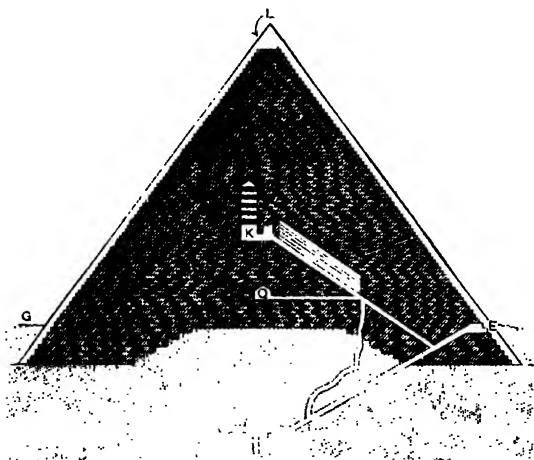
It has been found that in Khufu's pyramid there are about 2,300,000 blocks of limestone of an average weight of about two and a half tons. There are also a number of big blocks of granite which were used to roof the inner chambers. Some of these are about twenty-seven feet long, six feet high, and four feet thick, and of a weight of about fifty-five tons.

This great pyramid could not have been erected unless Egypt had been well organized. The pharaoh who reigned over the land at that time was so powerful that he could make a large army of workmen obey his commands. He was also very wealthy, as he had to provide food for many thousands of workmen.

The big gangs of labourers had to be overlooked and directed by foremen and kept in order by police. Skilled workmen who were engaged in the quarries, and those who dressed the stones, had first to be trained, and we know

they were well trained, for they had great skill. The big blocks of stone were so finely dressed that they fitted very closely together.

The architects who planned the pyramid must have been well-educated men. They had to make careful measurements and give instructions as to the number of big stones



Section of Great Pyramid of Khufu

K, King's Chamber. Q, Queen's Chamber. E, Entrance. G, Ground.  
L, Original casing of limestone.

required and the size of each one. They had also to arrange how the stones should be taken from the quarries and raised to their places on the pyramid.

Visitors to the pyramids often wonder how the big blocks of limestone were lifted up from the ground. The Egyptians had no cranes and they did not erect wooden scaffolds.

All the stones were taken across the River Nile in barges or on rafts. Then they were hauled by gangs of men along a causeway to the site of the building.

Long sloping ramps of brick were erected round the rising pyramid, and up these the blocks of limestone were hauled on sledges of wood so as to be placed in position with the aid of levers and scotches.

The work of hauling great stones up the sloping ramps must have been heavy and hard and exhausting. Those who have taken part in the game of "tug-of-war" can understand that there had to be "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together".

When, at length, Khufu's pyramid was finished, the ramps were taken down. The debris was then thrown over a small cliff near at hand, and can still be seen. Its bulk is half that of the great pyramid.

## CHAPTER VI

### Mummies and Statues

As has been stated, a pyramid was a pharaoh's tomb. It was built to protect the royal body, which was laid in an inner chamber. The Egyptians believed that the soul (*ba*) would continue to live in the Paradise, to which it went after the pharaoh died, as long as the body was preserved in the tomb.

The Egyptians thought that a man had two souls. One, the *ka*, remained in the tomb, while the other, the *ba*, which had wings like a bird and a human head, soared to the "world of souls" beyond the sky. There an everlasting

fig tree was believed to be growing on an island in a lake, and from that tree the *bai*-soul got fruit and the milk-like fluid which oozes from fig trees.

The Egyptians believed that the *bai*-soul sometimes came back to the tomb to visit the body and the *ka*-soul.

Before the body of the pharaoh was put into the tomb, it was preserved as a mummy. The earliest attempts to mummify the body were made by using salt and soda and melted resin from trees—a strong gum. During the early dynasties the salted body was covered over with linen soaked in gummy resin. The face was carefully treated, the linen being pasted on it so as to preserve the form of the features.

This early method of making a mummy was not very successful. The oldest one which has been found dates from the Fifth Dynasty—that is, the dynasty after the one in which the great pyramids near Cairo were erected. Hundreds of years went past before the art of mummification was perfected in Egypt.

It is thought that one reason why the Egyptians wanted to preserve the bodies of the dead was because a corpse which has been laid in a grave in the warm dry sand does not decay. The sand keeps out the air, and in a rainless country like Egypt no moisture enters the grave.

When the Egyptians began to line the graves with stone so that the sand could not get near the dead, the body quickly decayed. It was then thought that the stone “ate” the flesh. This curious idea, which seems so absurd to us, was believed in for hundreds of years. The Greeks, as well as the Egyptians, thought that stone ate the dead, and they called a stone coffin a “sarcophagus”, which means a “flesh-eater”.

The Egyptians, when they used salt and soda and resin to preserve the bodies of the dead, believed that these substances were "life-givers". They not only used the resin to make gum, which was smeared over the linen wrappings of the body, but burned it so that the smoke would enter the nostrils of the dead person and give him new life.



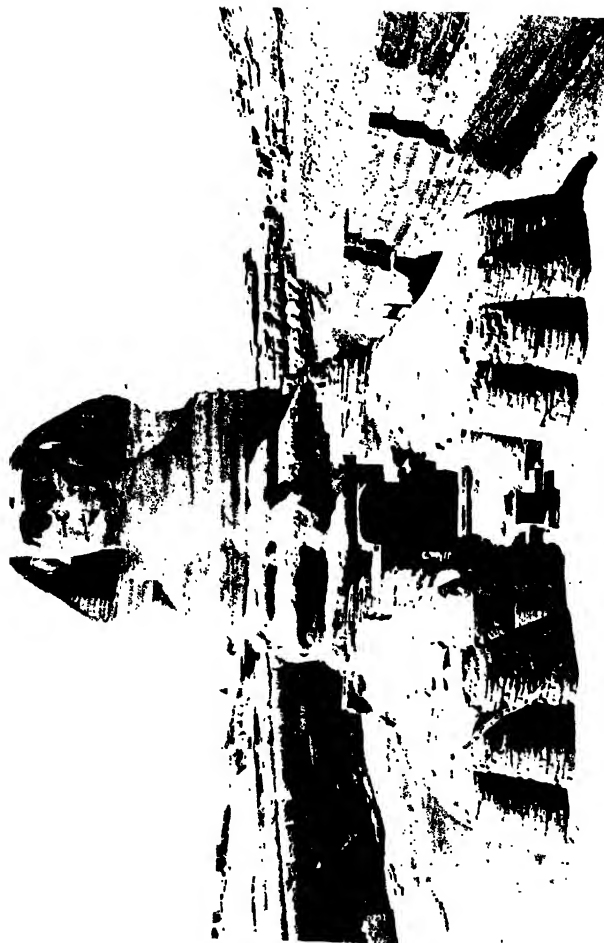
Mummy-head of Ramesses II

After the body was laid in the tomb, offerings of food and drink were made to it in the chapel attached to the tomb. It was believed that the dead would get the substance of the food and of the water and wine used.

Before the time when the big pyramids at Cairo were built, the Egyptians not only salted the body and wrapped it in gum-soaked linen, but also made clay, wooden, or stone models of the head of the dead man. Apparently they believed that if the body decayed, the *ka*-soul would live on in the image of the dead man.

In time, statues of the pharaoh were cut out of hard stone and put into the tomb, but no statue was found in the pyramid of Khufu. Only a small ivory image of him has been discovered. His tomb was plundered by robbers in ancient times, and the chamber in which his body lay has since been empty. Even the temple attached to the pyramid was destroyed.

Seven statues of Khafre have, however, been found. The sculptor cut out the images of this great pharaoh in diorite, which is a harder stone than granite.



THE GREAT SPHINX (see p. 21)

Between the paws is a Roman altar to the Sun-god, and beyond the commemorative tablet erected by Theodorus IV. The sand was cleared away in 1925.

Early Times

It is wonderful to think that we can gaze at the stone portrait of a great pharaoh who ruled in Egypt about fifty centuries ago! Khafre was sculptured sitting on his throne. He looks like a man who was accustomed to obedience; his face is calm and serene and without a wrinkle.

The name of the sculptor who made the statues of Khafre is not known. He was, however, one of the greatest sculptors who ever lived.

In ancient Egypt a sculptor was called "one who gives life". That was because it was believed that the *ka-soul* would go on living in the stone image of a dead man even although the body might turn to dust.

The art of sculpture thus began in Egypt because of a superstitious belief regarding the soul.

A great science originated from mummification. The Egyptians, who for many centuries attempted to preserve dead bodies, learned a great deal about anatomy, and they invented and used surgical instruments. The Greeks learned much about anatomy and surgery from them, but instead of using the knowledge thus got to deal with the dead, the Greeks used it to help the living, and they performed operations to relieve pain and cure disease.

Thus from the superstitious practice of making mummies came the science of surgery, as from the custom of making stone images for the *ka-soul* came the art of sculpture.

Pyramids were built for the royal families of Egypt only. The nobles had stone-built tombs now known as *mastabas*, a word meaning "platforms", because they look like platforms. The chambers are inside these flat-roofed tombs.

In time pyramids and mastabas went out of fashion and the tombs of rulers and their queens, of princes and princesses and aristocrats, were cut out of rock.



## CHAPTER VII

## Story of a Magician

*Long after the Pyramid Age the Egyptians told stories about Khufu and his family.*

A group of these stories were written on papyrus (paper made from the pulp of papyrus reeds) to be placed in a tomb, for it was believed that the dead man would sometimes wake up and want to read something.

A papyrus, which is known as the Westcar papyrus because it was taken from Egypt by Miss Westcar, an English lady, tells about Khufu, the builder of the largest pyramid, and about his sons, including Khafre, the builder of the second largest pyramid.

One day Khufu must have been feeling dull, because it is told that he called for his sons to tell him stories.

The stories they told are given in the papyrus. They are chiefly about magicians and other people who lived long before Khufu's time.

One of the sons said to Khufu: "You have been hearing about magicians who lived long ago. I can *show* you a magician who is still alive."

"Who is he, my son?" asked Khufu.

"A man named Dedi," the prince told; "he is 110 years old. He knows how to replace a head which has been cut off."

"Go yourself, my son, and bring this man to me," said Khufu.

The prince then left the palace and sailed up the Nile to the place where Dedi was living. He found that old

magician lying on a couch at the door of his house, and said to him:

"My father, Khufu, the pharaoh, has sent me for you. Come with me to the palace, and you will get the food that the royal family eats and also a rich reward."

Dedi said: "Bless you, O royal prince, who is loved by his father! Blessed be great Khufu, the pharaoh whom I adore."

Dedi was taken to the river-side and given a special boat for himself and his servants, and the prince and he sailed away to the city in which the royal palace was.

When the prince brought Dedi into the palace the pharaoh welcomed him, and then said:

"Is it true, Dedi, that you can replace a head which has been cut off?"

"Yes, my king, I know, indeed, how to do that," the old man answered.

Khufu then said to an official: "Bring a prisoner, and we shall see the thing done."

"Oh, my king!" Dedi cried out, "I would not do it to a man, nor even to a cow. I will use a duck instead."

The old papyrus story tells that Dedi performed his trick in a great hall in the palace. The pharaoh, his sons, and a number of officials sat on seats to watch him.

A duck was brought to the old magician. Its head was cut off. Then the head was laid on the west side of the hall and the body was laid on the east side.

Dedi spoke magic words, and the duck's body began to move towards the head and the head to move towards the body. Then Dedi placed the head on the body, and the duck stood up and quacked.

The magician next did the same trick with a goose.

This trick is still performed by some Egyptian conjurers.

They hide a living duck in their clothing, and when they pretend to be replacing the head on the dead duck's body, they suddenly hide the head and body and bring out the living duck. They do this so quickly that one who watches them is made to believe that the dead duck has been brought to life again.

Old Dedi must have made Khufu and the others think that he had healed the dead duck and made it live. They never saw through the trick. 179

We need not be surprised that when the pharaoh wanted to have a prisoner's head cut off, Dedi said he preferred to make use of a duck. He could not hide a living man, as he had hidden a duck or a goose.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Ancient Mariners

We are so accustomed to see great stone buildings being erected that we do not admire, as we should, the wonderful men who first began to build. They had to invent a great many things, and plan many things that are quite familiar to us.

There were busy brains as well as busy hands in those far-off times when the first builders set to work to do what had never been done before their day.

We are so accustomed also to see small boats and great ships that we are apt to forget that there was a time when boats and ships had to be invented.

The first boat-builders had to discover what shape a boat should be so that it might float upright in water and keep

its balance when a man sat in it. They had also to invent oars or paddles and masts and sails so that they might be able to make use of their boats, and they had to learn a great many things about winds and currents in order to use boats with safety.

The early Egyptians may have crossed the Nile by swimming in the days before boats were invented. It was, however, a very risky thing to swim in that river because there were so many crocodiles. Those fierce reptiles would seize and devour many of the daring men who entered the water.

It was very necessary that the early people in the Nile valley should cross the river in safety, and "necessity", as an old proverb says, "is the mother of invention".

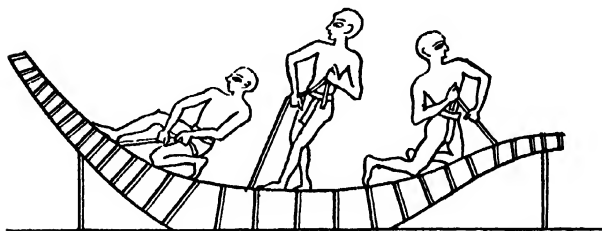
The first invention for a safe crossing of the Nile was a pair of floats tied together. Trees were scarce in Egypt, but there were large quantities of reeds. The Egyptians tied the reeds into bundles shaped like fish. They found that a single bundle was apt to roll round in the water when a man sat on it, but when two bundles were tied together they kept their balance.

The name given by the early Egyptians to the double-reed float was the *Binding*. An ancient ferryman would say, "I will cross the river in my Binding", just as a modern ferryman will say, "I will cross in my boat".

After the Bindings had been in use for a long time, some clever man invented a boat. He made it of reeds, the fore part being shaped like a fish and the stern part like the hinder end of a duck. To keep out the water, he covered the sides of the boat with slime and pitch. After experimenting for a time, he discovered the right proportions of a boat so that it might keep its balance as does a swimming bird.

The earliest boat was called the *Binding* because it was bound together with thongs just like the double-reed float.

It was a small boat of this kind which the mother of Moses used for her child. In the Bible the *Binding* is called an Ark. It is told that Moses' mother hid him for three months after he was born because a cruel pharaoh



Early Egyptian Boat called the "Binding" (from tomb picture)

had ordered that every Hebrew baby boy should be thrown into the Nile, where, of course, crocodiles were plentiful:

"And when she (the mother of Moses) could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes (reeds), and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it on the flags by the river's brink."

After reed boats had been in use for many years, the Egyptians began to make boats of wood. They made their wooden boats of the same shape as the reed boats, and they carved the wood at bow and stern to look like tied bundles of reeds (see pages 69 and 73).

In time the daring early sailors, who had learned how to row and sail boats on the calm waters of the Nile, began to venture out on the Mediterranean Sea. They made longer

and longer voyages until at length they were able to go to Lebanon, on the coast of Palestine, where large cedar trees were growing.

They cut down cedar trees and made rafts of the logs, which they towed to Egypt. With these supplies of wood they were able to build longer and stronger boats shaped like the original reed boats.

Before the time of the First Dynasty, founded by the pharaoh we know as Menes, the Egyptian sailors were exploring the lands round the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and had discovered several islands. These sailors were as daring men as those who first crossed the Atlantic and discovered the "New World" called America. To them the countries discovered round the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea were all "new worlds".

During the Third Dynasty, the pharaoh who came after Zoser, for whom the first pyramid—the "step pyramid" at Sakkara—was built, sent a fleet of forty ships to Lebanon to get cedar wood. The name of that pharaoh was Snefru. He had carved on stone a record of this expedition. We can be quite sure, however, that long before such a big fleet was sent from Egypt for supplies of wood, smaller fleets had been fitted out by earlier pharaohs.

During the Fourth Dynasty, when the great pyramids near Cairo were being built, large quantities of wood must have been taken across the sea to Egypt.

A carving of a sea-going ship has been found in a pyramid of the Fifth Dynasty. There are nineteen men in this vessel, which has a mast. The mast was made double, and was formed of a number of pieces of wood jointed together.

As the early seafarers did not know how to tack, the mast was lowered when the wind was against them, and it

is shown lowered and resting on a trestle in the tomb picture.

Oars were used in this boat, and seven are shown on one side; there must have been seven on the other side. There are three steering oars at the stern.

This boat was one of a fleet which sailed on the Red Sea.

It appears, therefore, that long before any pyramids were built the daring sailors of Egypt went on long voyages to discover "new worlds" and bring back those things they required but could not get in large enough quantities in their own land.

## CHAPTER IX

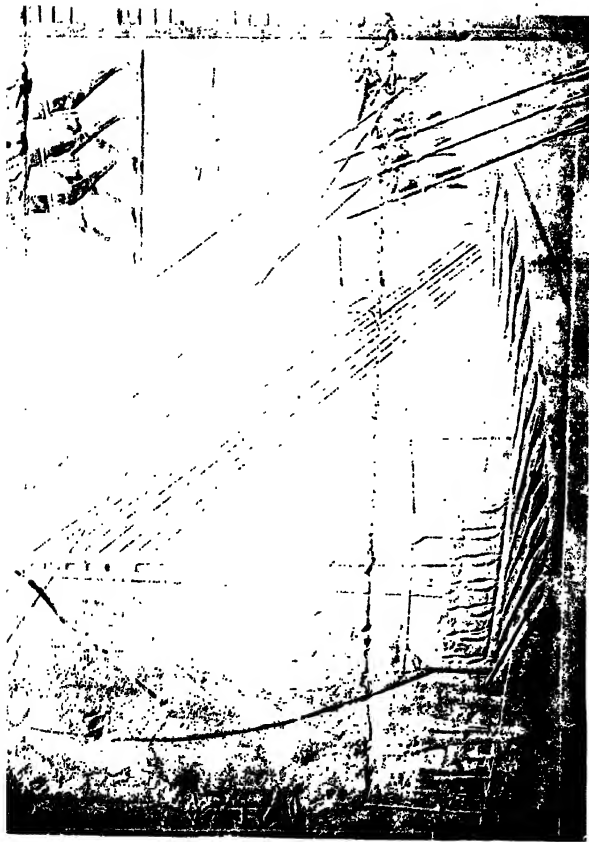
### The Great Middle Kingdom Pharaohs

The period of Egyptian history covered by the first ten dynasties is known to us as the Old Kingdom period. It lasted from about 3300 B.C. till about 2160 B.C.—that is, for over eleven hundred years.

Then came the Middle Kingdom period, beginning with the Eleventh Dynasty at about 2160 B.C. and ending about 1788 B.C.—thus occupying about three hundred and seventy-two years.

During the Old Kingdom period the capital was the city of Memphis near Cairo, but the powerful pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom belonged to the city of Thebes. The site of Thebes is marked to-day by the villages of Karnak and Luxor, and near it is "the Valley of Kings' Tombs" in which Tut-ankh-amon was buried in later times.

At the close of the Old Kingdom period the nobles of Egypt were becoming very powerful. They lived on large



### SHIP OF THE FIFTH DYNASTY

From a mural relief in the mastaba of Thy, an architect



estates in various parts of the country and kept their own fleets and armies. In time they became so strong that they defied the ruling pharaoh and rebellions broke out.

Wars were waged between the nobles and between groups of nobles, and at length the ruling family in Thebes became the foremost in the land.

About 2000 B.C. the Twelfth Dynasty was established by a great Theban pharaoh known to us as Amen-em-het I. This dynasty lasted for about two hundred years.

When Amen-em-het I came to the throne the great pyramids near Cairo were already about nine hundred years old.

He was a strong ruler, and he made the proud nobles obey his laws. His armies fought against the Nubians in the Soudan, and against the Asiatics who were invading the Delta region in the north.

He did his utmost to promote agriculture all over Egypt, and he had large areas irrigated by new canals. He built temples and had a strong palace, which was defended by armed men.

When the pharaoh was growing old a rebellion broke out in his palace, and an attempt was made to kill him.

Before he died he made his scribes write a document in which he gave advice to his favourite son, named Semsert, who reigned after him. This document has been discovered, and it is known to us as "The Instruction of Amen-em-het".

The pharaoh tells his son that, if he wishes to be a strong ruler, he must have no bosom friends and must not be too familiar with his nobles. "The people," he says, "heed most the man who makes them afraid."

The pharaoh then goes on to tell that he raised some men from humble life to be high officials, and yet they

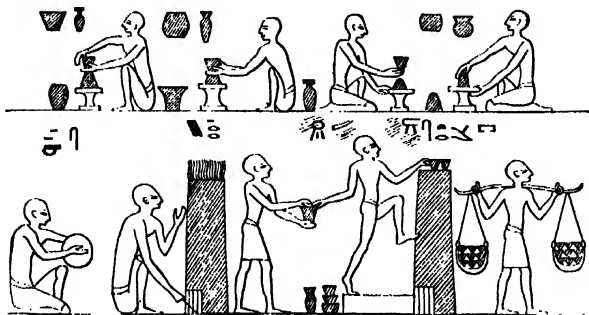
rebelled against him. One night, after he had dined, he lay down to rest, falling asleep. Suddenly he awoke to hear men whispering and coming against him with weapons. He sprang up, and he found to his sorrow that the chief rebel was the captain of the guard whose duty it was to protect the king. "If I had weapons," he tells, "I should have scattered that band of rebels."

The armed men who stole into the royal bedroom wanted to force Amen-em-het to make a prince, whom they favoured, his successor. They were, however, too late. Amen-em-het told them that Senusert had already been chosen as "crown prince".

Senusert, who was the next pharaoh, had a long reign, and then came the second Amen-em-het. In this dynasty there were four pharaohs called Amen-em-het and three called Senusert. Some of these rulers were very masterful men. As we can see from their sculptured portraits, they were as vigorous as they were stern.

Certain of them had to wage war against invaders. The third Senusert drove back Asiatics who tried to conquer the Delta region, and he invaded Palestine to break up their power. War was waged in the Soudan as well, because the negro and other tribes there were pressing northward, hoping for plunder in Egypt.

The Egyptians called part of the Soudan "Nubia", because gold was found among the desert hills, and their name for gold was *nub*. "Nubia" was therefore "Gold-land". One of the Twelfth-Dynasty nobles tells, in his tomb inscription, that he went to "Nubia" for gold for one of the pharaohs, and another tells that he commanded a fleet which visited Punt (Somaliland), where gold and sacred plants were found.



Ancient Egyptian Pottery Making

From a wall painting in the tombs of Beni-Hassan. The tombs were constructed during the Middle Kingdom, and contain representations of scenes from the domestic life of the early Egyptians

The Twelfth-Dynasty rulers were great builders of temples, and they kept sculptors and artists constantly employed. The sculptured portraits of the period are especially fine, and one of the most wonderful is that of an Amen-em-het which was cut out of the natural volcanic glass called obsidian.

The pharaohs increased the wealth of their country by adding to the number of farms. Many new canals were cut to irrigate the desert land and make it yield crops.

The most wonderful engineering scheme of this period was the forming of Lake Moeris in the Fayum, a big oasis to the west of the Nile valley and some distance south of Cairo.

Pharaoh after pharaoh of the Twelfth Dynasty developed this scheme until at length a great curving wall twenty-seven miles long was built, so as to store up the surplus water that flowed through a canal into the Fayum during the flood season.

When the Nile fell the waters of the big lake were let out through canals to irrigate the land and raise the level of the Nile itself.

The pharaoh who finished this great scheme was Amen-em-het III. He was one of the greatest of the ancient monarchs, and he reigned for nearly half a century. In the Fayum he built a large temple which the Greeks afterwards called "the Labyrinth", and he was buried near it in a pyramid.

The next king, the fourth Amen-em-het, had a short reign. He was followed by a queen, but she had not reigned long when revolts broke out in the land.

The two centuries which followed are the darkest in Egyptian history, for civil war brought much confusion, and then invaders from Asia came and fierce foreign kings ruled over the country.

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## CHAPTER X

### Story of the Shepherd Kings

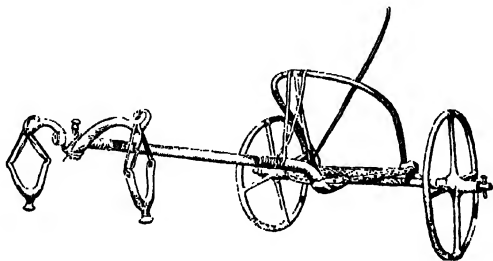
The Asiatics who invaded Egypt when it was made weak by civil war were called the Hyksos, a name which an ancient historian of Greek times translated as "Shepherd Kings". He said that "hyk" meant king and "sos" meant shepherds.

The Hyksos first conquered the Delta region, and their capital in that region was called Avaris. They forced all the nobles in Egypt to pay tribute to them.

It is not certain who the Hyksos were. We know, however, that they had better weapons than the Egyptians

and that while they ruled in Egypt the horse and chariot were introduced. Before their time no horses had ever been seen in Egypt. The peasants used asses to carry burdens, but most of the goods that had to be moved from place to place were conveyed in Nile boats.

The foreign soldiers who rode in chariots would have had no great difficulty in defeating the foot soldiers of Egypt. Chariots were something new in warfare, just as were the "tanks" which were first used in the recent Great



Egyptian Chariot

From the original in the Florence Museum

War. Indeed, the chariots were the "tanks" of the Hyksos period in Egypt.

The Hyksos destroyed many temples and other buildings in Egypt, and when the Egyptians got rid of them, they themselves destroyed the temples and the records of the Hyksos. That is one reason why we know so little about the "Shepherd Kings".

Nearly two hundred years after the Twelfth Dynasty came to an end, a ruling family in Thebes was growing strong, and the Hyksos king, whom the Egyptians knew as Apopi, wanted to pick a quarrel with the Thebans. He was jealous of their power and desired to crush it.

An old Egyptian story tells that Apopi sent a letter to the ruler of Thebes to complain about the noise made by the hippopotami in a pool at Thebes. He said that he could not sleep at night owing to the roaring of those big animals.

This complaint was very absurd, because Apopi, who lived in Avaris, could not hear the noise made by animals in a city which was several hundred miles away. It was as if a man living in Edinburgh sent a complaint to London about the roaring of lions in the Zoo, declaring that they kept him from sleeping.

The hippopotamus was a holy animal to the Thebans, and when the Hyksos king wanted to slay all the holy animals in Thebes on the pretence that the noise they made disturbed him, he did his best to make the Thebans revolt. He wanted to send an army against them.

War broke out between the Hyksos and the prince of Thebes. At first the former were successful, but the Egyptians began, after a time, to win victories. They had obtained as good weapons as the Hyksos, and they also got horses and chariots and learned how to use them in battle.

At length a Theban prince named Ahmes, who became the pharaoh about 1580 B.C., was so successful in his campaigns against the Hyksos that he drove them out of Egypt. He went north with a strong army and a strong river-fleet and won great victories, until at length he captured Avaris, the Hyksos capital.

The Hyksos army sought refuge in Palestine, but Ahmes followed them to that country and fought battles in Judah. Then Egypt became an independent country once again.

Some think it was during the long Hyksos period that Joseph lived in Egypt.

## CHAPTER XI

## The Napoleon of Egypt

The period of Egyptian history which followed the expulsion of the Hyksos is known as the "Empire period", because the pharaohs of Egypt ruled not only in their own land but in conquered territory in Western Asia, including Palestine and Syria.

Ahmes I, who drove out the Hyksos, was the first pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. One of the last pharaohs of this dynasty was Tut-ankh-amon.

The greatest of this family of rulers was Thothmes III, who is called "the Napoleon of Egypt". Before he came to the throne, however, a great queen named Hat-shep'sut ruled over the land. When she was selected by her father, Thothmes I, to succeed him, she came out in the attire of a prince and was addressed as one. She appears to have been a woman of great ability and strong will. When she sat on the throne at state ceremonies, she was clad like a pharaoh and wore a false beard. During part of her reign a prince, known to us as Thothmes II, shared the government with her, but he does not seem to have been more than a figure-head. He died before the queen.

Thothmes III was a great general. Soon after he began to reign he waged war against the rivals of Egypt, who were growing very powerful in Syria. He conducted in all about seventeen campaigns in that region, until at length the Egyptian Empire was extended to the borders of Asia Minor.

A number of peoples had allied themselves against Egypt,

and seemed to be getting ready to do what the Hyksos had done. They were gradually conquering Palestine, and it was feared they would attempt to enter Egypt if not opposed by Thothmes III.

One of these peoples was the Hittites, who had their capital in Asia Minor; another was the Amorites, and a third was the people of Mitanni, a state lying between north Syria and the upper reaches of the River Euphrates.

Thothmes III made a treaty with the state of Mitanni, the rulers of which had Aryan names, and appear to have been the descendants of the warriors who first introduced war chariots into western Asia from Iran (modern Persia).

The Egyptians were successful in their wars not only on land but at sea. The island powers of Cyprus and Crete had to pay tribute to Pharaoh Thothmes III, the Empire-builder, and the kings of Mesopotamia sent him rich presents in order to secure his friendship. Thothmes was, in his day, the most powerful monarch in the world, and when he died in 1447 B.C. Egypt was looked up to by all other states.

Another great pharaoh of his line, who began to reign thirty years later, was Amenhotep III, the grandfather of Tut-an-kh-amon. He reigned for about thirty-six years (1411 B.C. till 1375 B.C.). His mother was a princess of Mitanni, and he married a famous lady whom we know as Queen Ti.

Amenhotep was an able soldier and a keen sportsman. He delighted in lion-hunting, and during his lifetime he slew no fewer than a hundred and two lions.

In his beautiful palace in Thebes he lived in great luxury, for he was very wealthy. When his mummy was found and examined, however, it was discovered that for a great

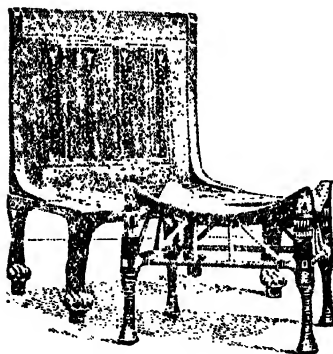


part of his life he suffered from constant toothache and from gumboils. The Egyptian doctors did not know how to treat toothache. They never pulled a tooth. The richest and most powerful king in the world had therefore to suffer much pain. If there had been a dentist in the world in those days, Amenhotep "the Magnificent", as he was called, would have rewarded him well by making him very rich.

In early times in Egypt the people had good teeth, but, as is found by examining the skeletons and mummies, teeth began to decay after luxuries were introduced. The aristocrats who were living when the great pyramids near Cairo were being built, suffered from bad teeth, and after their time dental diseases were common among the rich, but very rare among the poor, who ate coarser food.

The aristocrats of Amenhotep's time were most refined and had many luxuries. The walls of their rooms were richly decorated with painted pictures and tapestries, and

the furniture was of beautiful design and inlaid with ivory, precious stones, enamels, and gold. When they dined, they used gold and silver jugs and bowls, crystal glasses, and gaily-coloured porcelain dishes. The floors of their rooms were of tiles in rich colours and were covered with rugs of rare beauty. Musicians played lyres and harps and flutes, and



Egyptian Chair and Stool inlaid with Ivory  
18th Dynasty  
From the originals in the British Museum

sang to them, and large numbers of servants waited on them.

Amenhotep was a great builder. On the western plain of Thebes he had erected in front of a temple two seated statues of himself, each fifty feet high, which still survive but in a much damaged condition.

When the Greek and Roman tourists visited Egypt to see its wonders, many went out before dawn to hear a musical sound which came from the mouth of one of the statues of Amenhotep III. As soon as the sun rose, this sound was heard, and it is possible that it was caused by a wooden instrument which expanded by heat. The statue was called "the vocal Memnon", and it was one of the great marvels of Egypt in ancient times.

## CHAPTER XII

### The Tut-ankh-amon Age

Amenhotep IV, the next pharaoh, was not, like his father, a soldier and lion-hunter. He was a poet and dreamer and a religious reformer.

When he came to the throne the Egyptians were, like their ancestors for hundreds of years, worshipping many gods and goddesses. In every temple there were images of these deities, and many of them looked very absurd. Some had human bodies with the heads of beetles, of birds like the ibis or falcon, of cows, jackals, rams, serpents, or crocodiles. Gods with human heads, like Ptah (pronounced *two*) and Osiris, had green or black faces. Sacred animals,



### THE MAUSOLEUM OF TUT-ANKHAMON

The sealed doorway from the antechamber was broken down on 26th February, 1923, and the huge gilded shrine filled with blue faience revealed.

Reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Howard Carter

including cows, bulls, crocodiles, and hippopotami, were worshipped as forms of some deity or other.

There were many temples in Egypt, and in these were large numbers of priests who had great estates and were accustomed to receive their share of taxation and tribute. These priests were very powerful and had to be consulted by the pharaoh regarding the affairs of state. Some of the pharaohs, indeed, were little more than "tools" in their hands.

At Thebes there were huge temples and hundreds of priests. As that city was the capital, the aristocrats had houses in it, and it prospered greatly.

Amenhotep IV wished to abolish all the gods and stop the worshipping of the idols. He declared that there was only one true God, whose power was displayed by the sun, and he referred to Him as Aton. He told his subjects that Aton could be worshipped without images, and no image of Aton was ever made.

The priests of the ram-god Amon, the pharaoh of all the gods, were angry with Amenhotep IV and refused to give him their support. They were backed by the people of Thebes and by many of the nobles.

Amenhotep IV then decided to leave Thebes and build a new capital some distance to the north of it. He called this city Akhetaton, which means "Horizon of Aton", and its site is marked by the modern Tel-el-Amarna. He also changed his own name from Amenhotep, which means "Amon is pleased", to Akh-en-aton, which means "Aton is satisfied".

When the new capital was built Akh-en-aton declared that he would never leave it. He was to devote his life to worshipping the One God, Aton, and teaching the people

the new religion. He made laws forbidding the worship of the old gods and goddesses all through the Egyptian Empire, and the priests lost their wealth and their temples were closed.

Akh-en-aton reigned for about seventeen years. His queen was a beautiful princess named Nefertiti, and they had three daughters but no son.

When the vassals of Egypt in western Asia and the rival kings of Asia Minor and Syria came to know that the pharaoh of Egypt was a religious teacher and not a warrior, there were rebellions and military raids. Complaints were sent to Akh-en-aton by loyal rulers and officials, but he sent back letters only and not soldiers. The ultimate result was that Egypt lost most of its territory in Asia and all the wealth in tribute that had come regularly for many years from the vassals.

When Akh-en-aton died in his capital, revolts were breaking out in Egypt itself.

A prince who married Akh-en-aton's eldest daughter was the heir to the throne, but he did not reign long. Then the husband of his next daughter became the pharaoh. His name was Tut-ankh-aton. The revolution had made progress, however, and the worship of the god Amon was being restored in the land. The pharaoh was forced at length to change his name to Tut-ankh-amon, and to leave the new city and bring the court back to Thebes, which became the capital of Egypt once again.

The Egyptians believed that all the trouble which had fallen upon them was due to the anger of the old gods who had been neglected. They spoke of Akh-en-aton as "that criminal", and declared that the god Amon was their "shepherd" and their "pilot".

When the court returned to Thebes it became a busy city again. The temples were reopened and repaired. An army was sent to Palestine to fight against the enemy there and keep Egypt from invasion.

Tut-ankh-amon was a very young man when he came to the throne and was merely a "figure-head". He appears to have done all the Amon party wanted him to do; and when he died he was greatly honoured by being given a rich burial.

A rock-cut tomb had been prepared for him in the Valley of Kings' Tombs near Thebes, and it was packed with all the things a pharaoh was supposed to require in the next world.

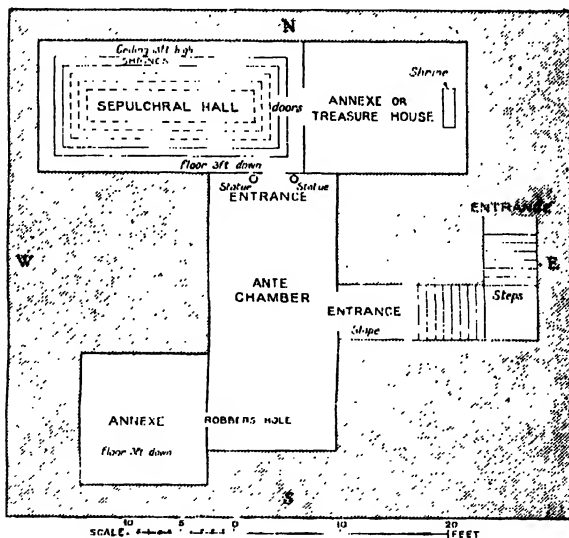
When the tomb was discovered by Mr. Howard Carter in the winter of 1922, its entrance and the flight of stone steps leading down to it had been lying under a great heap of sand and stones for about 3000 years. The passage between the outer door and the inner door of the tomb had been filled in with stones to prevent the ancient thieves breaking in. It was found, however, that some years after Tut-ankh-amon had died, robbers did get into the tomb by making a hole through the filling between the doorways.



Statuette of Amon Ra

They had searched through the cases and boxes in the tomb and had taken away some treasure, while they left everything in confusion. Then officials entered the tomb, tried to tidy things up, and closed the holes made by the robbers. The tomb entrance was afterwards buried in rubbish, and in time its location was forgotten, for above the spot huts were built for workmen who made a tomb for a later pharaoh higher up on the face of the cliff.

When Mr. Carter and Lord Carnarvon got their first glimpse of the inside of the tomb, it looked as if it were a furniture store. Beds, chairs, couches, boxes, &c., had been



Plan of Tut-ankh-amon's Tomb

It is supposed that the tomb was never completed. The explanation is that Tut-ankh-amon's premature end found his tomb little advanced beyond its preliminary stages.

packed into the rock-hewn apartment. Beneath one of the couches was a hole made in a built-up door. Ancient thieves had entered an inner apartment through this hole, and when an electric torch was thrust into it, the explorers saw that everything was in confusion. The thieves had littered the floor with the contents of boxes, &c., searching for jewels and objects of gold and silver that could be easily carried away. This apartment is called the "annexe". It is on the west of the outer apartment, called the "antechamber", which is entered through a narrow passage from the east.

On the north side of the "antechamber" is the "sepulchral hall", and to the east of this hall is the "treasure house".

Tut-ankh-amon's mummy was discovered in the "sepulchral hall". It had been enclosed in a gold coffin inside a great shrine covered with gold and having panels on the sides inlaid with blue ornaments.

The large number of objects found in the tomb give us a vivid idea of the luxurious lives led by the royalties and nobles of the Eighteenth Dynasty. They also testify, by their fine workmanship and designs, to the great skill of the artistic craftsmen of the time.

After Tut-ankh-amon died, a pharaoh named Ai or Eye had a short reign—one no longer than three years. He died about 1350 B.C., and then the Eighteenth Dynasty came to an end.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Rameses the Great

During the Nineteenth Dynasty Egypt recovered much of its lost empire in Asia. The first pharaoh was Hor-em-



heb, who had been a general during the reigns of Akh-en-aton and Tut-ankh-amon. He reigned at a time when Egypt had much need of a strong military leader.

Then came Rameses I, an elderly man, who reigned for two years. He was followed by his son Seti I, who ruled over Egypt for more than twenty years. This able pharaoh waged war in Palestine and Syria. The Amorites and the Hittites were very powerful, but he won victories. Then he made peace with the enemy. He also fought against the Libyans, the ancestors of the modern Berbers, in the western Delta area.

The next pharaoh was Rameses II, who is known as "Rameses the Great". He was the last of the great con-

querors, and he reigned over Egypt for the long period of sixty-seven years (1292 B.C. till 1225 B.C.).

Rameses carried on war for sixteen years against the Hittites, Amorites, and their allies in Palestine and Syria. It was his ambition to win back the whole of the Egyptian empire in Asia which had been conquered and held by Thothmes III. He did not, however, meet with complete success, and had to be content with holding Palestine and southern Phoenicia. Then he made



Rameses II

From a statue in Turin Museum

a treaty of peace with the Hittite king, his chief rival in Syria. At the time a new power was coming into prominence. This was Assyria in northern Mesopotamia, which had several strong towns, including Nineveh (modern Mosul). The Egyptians and the Hittites found it necessary to make peace in case the Assyrians should attack them both when they were weakened by constant war.

Rameses II devoted the rest of his reign to developing Egyptian industries and trade and to building temples and setting up statues of himself. He left his mark in every part of Egypt. One might well think, on visiting Egypt to-day and seeing so many remains of his buildings, that he was the greatest pharaoh who ever lived.

One of his great works is to be seen at Abu Simbel, which lies to the south of Assouan. There he had two temples cut out in a mountain, one to the god Amon and himself, and one to the goddess Hat-hor and his wife, Queen Nefertari. An inscription by Rameses says the queen's temple is for "Nefertari whom he loves", and the queen's inscription says the other temple is for her husband and that she "loves him".

Outside the larger temple were carved four seated human figures, each ninety feet high. Only one is now complete, as rocks fell on the others and damaged them. Two of the statues are of Rameses and two of his queen.

The pharaoh was regarded by the ancient Egyptians as a god—the human form of their chief god. At Abu Simbel the queen is the human form of the chief goddess.

Another great work by this pharaoh is the "Great Hall" at Thebes (Karnak), which has the largest stone columns ever built anywhere in the world. On the top of one of these a hundred men could stand together. The

Hall measured sixty feet longer than Westminster Hall, London, and the cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, could be placed inside it. There are 134 columns, and the lintel block over the portal measured forty feet and weighed about 150 tons.

On the western bank of the Nile is the temple known as the Ramesseum, which is of great beauty. A granite statue of Ramesses II was set up in front, but has fallen, and lies in pieces. It weighed about a thousand tons.

Rameses employed many captives and slaves to work for him, and some think that among them were the Hebrews. We do not, however, know enough about the happenings of his long reign to be sure that Ramesses was the pharaoh of the oppression. His inscriptions are chiefly about himself, and about the wars he fought in, and the buildings he had set up. He never tells anything against himself.

Rameses was so vain that he had the names of some of the earlier pharaohs chipped off their monuments and his own cut on them instead. He wanted future generations to think of him as the greatest ruler who ever lived.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Sea and Land Raiders

When Merne-ptah, the son of Ramesses II, was the pharaoh, there was a great deal of unrest in Palestine, in Syria, and in south-eastern Europe. The country we know as Greece had been overrun by warrior bands from the north, and about the time of Akh-en-aton Crete had been invaded.



IN 1951

FAÇADE OF TEMPLE AT ABU SIMBEL

After Rameses II died these and other fighting peoples began to invade the Delta region, having allied themselves with the Libyans. Merne-ptah had to wage war against the Libyans and their friends from across the Mediterranean, and with invaders who came pouring southward from Asia Minor into Palestine. He won victories, and among those he subdued he mentions Israel in one of his records. The chief people from across the Mediterranean who helped the Libyans were known as the Shardana.



Philistine Prisoners

From the bas relief on the gate of the Temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu

About a century later, when Rameses III of the Twentieth Dynasty was the pharaoh, the sea raiders of south-eastern Europe and Asia Minor became very active again. A determined attempt was made to invade Egypt. A big fleet crossed the Mediterranean to the Delta, and armies of allies marched southward through Palestine. Among the sea raiders were the Shardana (the people who afterwards gave their name to Sardinia), the Danaana (the Danaans of Homer), a people who were probably the Achaeans, and a people from Crete. The chief among the land raiders were the Philistines, who wore kilts and had feather head-dresses not unlike those of the

Red Indians of North America. It is believed that they were the descendants of Cretans who had settled in Asia Minor.

Rameses III was a vigorous leader, and he defeated the sea raiders in a naval battle on the Delta coast. He also marched into Palestine and defeated the Philistines, and took a number of prisoners. He thus saved Egypt from conquest. In his temple at Medinet Habu are sculptured reliefs of the naval battle and of the battles in Palestine, and one can see depicted on a pylon the Philistine prisoners as they march past in procession with their arms bound. The Philistines who settled in Palestine (a name which means "Land of the Philistines") became the vassals of Egypt.

A few years after this attempt to conquer Egypt, the sea raiders began to wage war against the city of Troy at the entrance to the Dardanelles. This is the war which the poet Homer made so famous.

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## CHAPTER XV

### The Age of Solomon

No fewer than ten pharaohs named Rameses reigned during the Twentieth Dynasty, but with the exception of Rameses III, none of them was powerful. Then followed a dynasty of priest-kings, who governed Egypt for nearly a century and a half.

In the Delta region the Libyans became gradually stronger, and they were reinforced by settlers from south-

eastern Europe. At length one of their princes, named Sheshonk, seized the Egyptian throne and became the pharaoh. The dynasty he founded lasted for about two centuries.

Sheshonk I of Egypt is mentioned in the Bible by his Hebrew name of Shishak. King Solomon was reigning in Palestine when the Libyan monarch was the pharaoh, and he made a treaty of peace with him. Solomon married a daughter of Sheshonk's. "Solomon," we read (*1 Kings*, iii, 1), "made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David." The city of Gezer was occupied by Canaanites who were enemies of Sheshonk and Solomon. It is told in the Bible:

"Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife" (*1 Kings*, ix, 16).

After Solomon died, Rehoboam, his son, was King of Israel. His half-brother Jeroboam revolted against Solomon, and had to flee to Egypt. He appears to have made trouble there. In 926 B.C., after Rehoboam had reigned for about five years, Shishak invaded Palestine. He plundered Jerusalem, and it is told in the Bible that "he took away the treasures of the house (temple) of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made . . . And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" (*1 Kings*, xiv, 25-30).

## CHAPTER XVI

## The Ethiopian Pharaohs

Egypt was much disturbed during the dynasty founded by Sheshonk. The Libyans who took the places of the old Egyptian nobles were difficult to hold in check, and in time the country became broken up into petty states. Then a strong nation came into existence in the south. This was Ethiopia—the country between Assouan and modern Khartoum. It had been organized by the heirs of the Egyptian priest-kings and their supporters who had been driven out of Egypt by the Libyans. The affairs of state were controlled by the priests of the god Amon.

Soon after the year 800 B.C. an Ethiopian army moved northward and captured the city of Thebes. Then about 741 B.C. the Ethiopians set out to conquer the whole of Egypt under the leadership of their king Piankhy. There was much alarm in the Delta, and Tefnekht, the most powerful Libyan prince in that area, moved south from Memphis with his army to regain lost territory. Several battles were fought, and the Ethiopians were the victors in the end, and they pushed northward and captured Memphis.

Shabaka, a kinsman of Piankhy, became in 712 B.C. the pharaoh of all Egypt and established the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which is known as the Ethiopian Dynasty. The Libyan nobles were forced to recognize him as their overlord.

The long struggle between the Ethiopians and the Libyans is referred to in the Bible. Isaiah the prophet declared to the people of Judah:



"Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh unto Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city and kingdom against kingdom. . . . And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord" (*Isaiah*, xix).

After Shabaka had established his power in Egypt, he sent his agents to Palestine and Syria to stir the rulers in these lands to revolt against Assyria, which had become the most powerful nation in Asia. Isaiah warned the king of Judah against Egypt, and he foretold that the king of Assyria would "lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives". The people of Judah would then, Isaiah declared, be "ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory" (*Isaiah*, chapter xx). The Ethiopian pharaoh sent an army into Palestine, but was defeated by the Assyrians.

Shabaka was succeeded by a pharaoh named Shabataka. He was followed by Taharka, who is believed to have slain him.

This pharaoh is referred to in the Bible by his Hebrew name of Tirhakah. He hoped to revive the influence of Egypt in Palestine, and did his utmost to stir up rebellion there against Assyria. It is told in the Bible that an Assyrian agent who visited Jerusalem "heard say concerning Tirhakah". He at once warned Hezekiah, king of Judah:

"Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?" (*Isaiah*, chapter xxxvii).

Essarhaddon, king of Assyria, had a great deal of trouble with his vassals in Syria and Palestine, and it was caused

mainly by Egypt. He prepared, therefore, to deal with Taharkah, the Ethiopian pharaoh, in his own land, and in 674 B.C. he invaded Egypt, but he was defeated in battle and had to retreat.

Three years later the Assyrian king invaded Egypt with a very much stronger army. He crushed all opposition in the Delta, and pushed on to the city of Memphis (near modern Cairo), which he captured. The Ethiopian army was scattered in flight, and Taharka had to give up the whole of Lower Egypt. No fewer than twenty ruling lords in that area took the oath to serve the king of Assyria as their supreme ruler, and chief among those was Necho, the prince of the city of Sais. Essarhaddon styled himself "King of Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt".

After Essarhaddon returned to Nineveh, the Delta lords plotted with Taharka, and Essarhaddon planned another campaign to crush a rising against him. He died, however, before his army reached Egypt (668 B.C.).

## CHAPTER XVII

### "Assyrian Conquest of Egypt

After some delay, the next Assyrian king, who was named Ashur-banipal, sent a strong army into Egypt. Taharka had previously reconquered the city of Memphis, and went north towards the Delta frontier to meet the Assyrians. His army was defeated and he fled southward to Thebes. The Assyrians followed him, but did not capture that city. Once again the Assyrian king was proclaimed overlord of Egypt.

After Taharka died, he was succeeded in Thebes by a prince named Tanut-amon. This new pharaoh attempted to reconquer Lower Egypt. He went north with a strong army and captured the city of Memphis, defeating the Assyrians and Libyans. In this battle Necho was slain, and his son Psamtek, who escaped, fled to Syria. A number of Delta lords took the oath to serve Tanut-amon as the pharaoh of Egypt.

Ashur-banipal, the Assyrian king, was furious when he heard of the Ethiopian ruler's campaign, and he sent from Nineveh a large army to reconquer Egypt. Tanut-amon was forced to take flight from Memphis before the Assyrians, but he found he could not seek refuge in the city of Thebes, because the Assyrians followed closely at his heels. He therefore withdrew his army farther to the south.

Thebes was at the time a rich and prosperous city. Homer, the Greek poet, refers to it in his great epic, the *Iliad*, in the lines:

Thebes

With mighty stores of wealth, a hundred gates  
Each pouring forth two hundred men with cars  
And horses.

It was known to the Hebrews as "No", the full name being Nu-Amon (the city of the god Amon). The Assyrians entered the city and plundered it. Its temples contained much treasure, and the fierce invaders carried it all away. From one temple they took two great silver obelisks which weighed 2500 talents, and these were conveyed with numerous gold objects to Nineveh.

It appears that many of the citizens of Thebes were put to death or taken prisoners. The Hebrew prophet Nahum refers to the fall of No (Thebes) when foretelling the destruction of Nineveh:

"Art thou better than populous No (Thebes), that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it? . . . Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite. . . . Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains" (*Nahum*, chapter iii).

After the Assyrians had wrecked and plundered Thebes, and made captives and slaves of many of its great men, the ancient city gradually fell into decay. Its ruins at the present day are the most wonderful in the world.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Psamtek, the Libyan Pharaoh

Psamtek, the son of Necho, who had fled to Syria to escape the Ethiopians, became a great man in Egypt after Thebes was sacked. Ashur-banipal, the Assyrian king, set him above all the other princes, and for a few years he reigned as an Assyrian vassal. When, however, Ashur-banipal's brother, the king of Babylon, rebelled against him, Psamtek ceased to be a vassal and made Egypt independent once again. We do not know whether or not he arranged a treaty with Assyria, but he certainly lived at peace with that country, and he sent an army to help the Assyrian king when the Babylonians and Medes fought against him.

Psamtek had a reign of over half a century, and Egypt prospered under him. He encouraged Greek colonists to settle in the Delta and engage in trade, and he developed

the sea trade of Egypt, which was carried on chiefly by the Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon.

Thebes ceased to be a political force after Assyria had broken its power, but the city of Memphis flourished, and large numbers of traders from Europe and western Asia lived there.

During Psamtek's reign the scholars revived an interest in the great past of Egypt, and it became fashionable to imitate the manners and customs of the Old Kingdom period. Temples were built in the Old Kingdom style, and the Old Kingdom gods were worshipped. Sculptors and artists imitated the style of those of the Old Kingdom. The city of Sais in the Delta was the centre in which the revival was fostered, and it was adorned with fine buildings, and there Psamtek had a magnificent palace.

## CHAPTER XIX

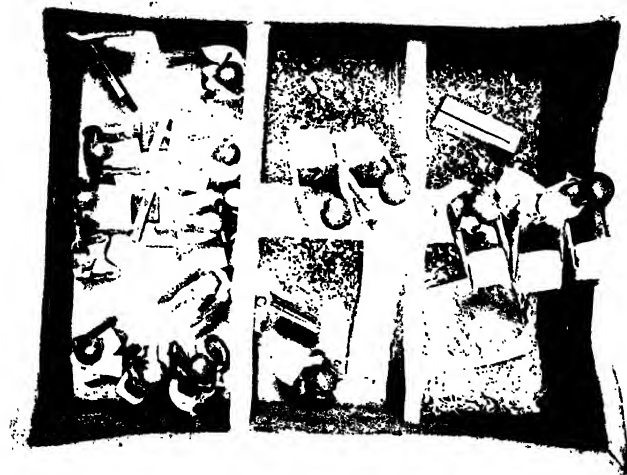
### Egypt as Assyria's Ally

Psamtek lived long enough to see great changes in the ancient world. Assyria, under Ashur-banipal, had for many years been the strongest power in Asia, and Nineveh (Mosul) was a rich and prosperous city. Babylonia was ruled by Assyria as a subject state, and in the city of Babylon there was a vassal king who was also the high priest.

Ashur-banipal, the Assyrian emperor, died in 626 B.C. after reigning for over forty years. He had crushed all the strong states which were opposed to him, but in doing so he laid his country open to invasion by the fierce mountaineers who had been kept in check by these states.



Cattle in their byre



A granary: Scribes recording the grain which labourers measure and dump into bins

# WORKERS ON AN EGYPTIAN ESTATE, 2000 B.C.

Models found in a rock-chamber near Thebes. Reproduced by courtesy of the  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photos. by Harry Burton  
(1920)

In western Persia, the state of Elam, which had been ravaged by the Assyrians, was overrun afterwards by the Medes, who gradually became a powerful people under a strong ruler. In the north of Persia and in the country now known as Armenia, another people, known as the Scythians, became powerful also. They had armies of mounted men who raided and plundered the cities which were not strong enough to hold out against them. As they carried out their operations over a wide area in the northern parts of the Assyrian Empire, it was very difficult to deal with them. If an army was sent against them, they retreated and made attacks in another area which was clear of soldiers.

About a dozen years before Ashur-banipal died a Scythian force invaded Palestine from the north. Psamtek of Egypt was at the time trying to establish his power in southern Palestine, but he found the Scythians were too powerful for him, and he bribed them with rich gifts to leave the land. Assyria was so fully occupied fighting against its enemies in other parts of its empire that it could not pay any attention to Palestine.

After Ashur-banipal died the Medes, the Scythians, and the Babylonians formed an alliance against Assyria, and there was constant war. Psamtek of Egypt had become the ally of Assyria, and that appears to have been the reason why he invaded Palestine. In reward for Egypt's help, Assyria was willing that Psamtek should regain a large part of Egypt's ancient empire in Palestine and Syria.

In 616 B.C. the Babylonian king, who had become independent, was trying to conquer the western part of the Assyrian Empire. His aim was to get possession of Syria and Palestine.

Psamtek went north to Syria with an army, and he joined forces with the Assyrian forces after crossing the Euphrates. The Babylonians retired, avoiding battle.

During the next three years the Babylonians never appeared in the west. They were fully engaged in the east helping the Medes and Scythians to break the power of Assyria. In 614 B.C. the city of Asshur was captured, and in 612 B.C. Nineveh fell and was plundered and destroyed. Nothing remained then of the great Assyrian Empire but the western part. The last Assyrian king established his power in the city of Harran on the Euphrates in Upper Mesopotamia.

In 610 B.C. the Babylonians and Scythians moved against Harran, and the Assyrians were forced to evacuate it, retiring across the Euphrates to Carchemish.

Psamtek of Egypt died in 609 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Pharaoh Necho.

Once again the Egyptian army went to the help of the Assyrians. An attempt was made to recapture Harran, but it failed.

In 608 B.C. the Babylonians and Scythians crossed the Euphrates and won a victory over the Assyrians and Egyptians.

After his defeat, Pharaoh Necho fled southward through Palestine, and before reaching Egypt he was compelled to arrange a treaty of peace which gave Syria and Palestine to the Babylonians.

It is told in the Bible that "the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the brook of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt" (*2 Kings*, chapter xxiv, 7).



The people of Judah had mocked the Egyptians as they fled southward. "Pharaoh king of Egypt," cried Jeremiah, "is but a noise" (*Jeremiah*, chapter xlv, verse 17).

Thus after a few years' possession, Egypt lost a great part of her ancient empire which had dropped into her hands owing to the sudden collapse of Assyrian power.

## CHAPTER XX

### An Ancient Suez Canal

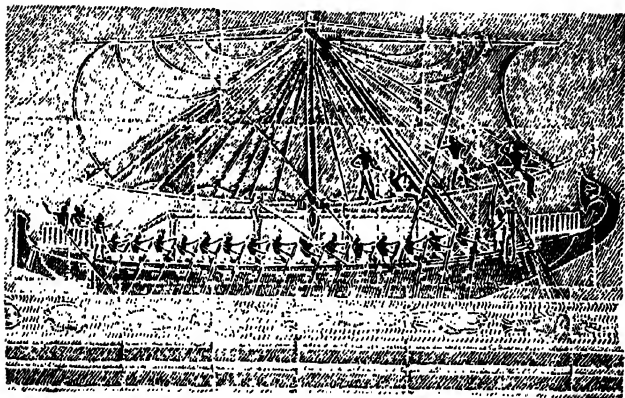
Necho lost the war because his enemies were too powerful for him. The Babylonians took possession of the trade routes through Palestine and Syria, and against such rivals the Egyptian merchants could not expect to make much headway, because their goods were taxed heavily, and in the towns the Babylonian merchants had an advantage over them. If the desert robbers interfered with Babylonian merchants as they travelled from place to place with their goods, they would be punished by Babylonian soldiers. The Egyptians could not claim such protection, however. Indeed, they might be robbed by the Babylonian soldiers themselves.

Necho was anxious to develop Egyptian trade, and he saw that this could be done by opening up new sea routes. One of his schemes was to connect the Red Sea with the Nile by means of a canal, so as to develop trade with Arabia and other countries.

A canal of this kind was formerly in existence, but had been neglected and become choked with sand. During the Empire period a great deal of use had been made of

it. Queen Hatshepsut of the Eighteenth Dynasty sent fleets of large vessels to Punt (Somaliland) from the city of Thebes, and they passed through the canal to the Red Sea, and returned again without having to tranship their cargoes.

The canal followed for some distance the route of the present Suez Canal. It connected the Red Sea with the "Bitter Lakes", but then, instead of going north to the



• Egyptian Ship of the Punt Expedition carried out by order of Queen Hatshepsut

From the relief in the Temple of Deir-el-Bahari

Mediterranean, it turned westward through a valley between limestone hills, part of which is known as the Wadi Tumilat, to join an eastern branch of the River Nile in the Delta. It was broad enough to allow two large vessels to pass one another. Some of the smaller Delta streams must have been deepened and connected with the long canal. Large numbers of workers were no doubt constantly employed

during the Empire period keeping the canal deep enough for the ships and repairing the banks. When the Nile rose in flood, the branch rivers in the Delta were apt to change their beds and do a great deal of damage.

By the time of Rameses III of the Twentieth Dynasty the canal had gone out of use owing to neglect. When that pharaoh sent ships to Punt (Somaliland), they had to be unloaded at a harbour on the Red Sea coast, and the goods were carried across the desert to the Nile valley on the backs of large numbers of donkeys.

Herodotus tells us that the length of the canal which Necho wanted to have constructed was equal to four days' journey. The work was begun at the part nearest to Arabia. Large numbers of men were employed, and no fewer than one hundred and twenty thousand of them perished. It may be that some terrible disaster took place of which there is no record. The engineers may have made mistakes, and a good many men may have been drowned by flooding. Diodorus, another Greek writer, says that the engineers warned Pharaoh Necho of the danger of flooding. The Red Sea is on a higher level than the Delta, and they feared that its waters would flow into Egypt and cause a great deal of destruction. They were evidently not as skilful men as were the engineers who had planned the earlier canal.

Necho had to abandon his canal scheme and give up all hope of connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. He then turned his attention to improving trade on the sea routes already in existence. Large fleets were built to sail on the Mediterranean and on the Red Sea. As the land route through Palestine had been closed against his merchants, or made difficult for them by the Babylonians, he dispatched ships from the Delta coast of Egypt direct to Syria.

## CHAPTER XXI

## Famous Voyage of Explorers

Necho appears to have employed many Phœnicians to man his ships. They were at the time the finest sailors in the world. Their ships were of the Egyptian type, but they had become bolder navigators than the Egyptians.

The early mariners sailed round the coasts, keeping the land in sight, and thus had to make very long voyages from place to place. They sailed in daylight only. When night came on, they cast anchor in a safe harbour. The Phœnicians, on the other hand, struck out to sea, and by night they steered by observing the stars. The "north star", which never moves, was called by the Greeks "the Phœnician" because the Phœnician sailors had introduced the custom of taking their bearings by it.

Necho had a scheme of developing trade by sending ships southward from the Red Sea along the African coast. The Egyptians believed that the world was surrounded by an outer ocean, and Necho wanted to explore that part of it which washed the coast of Africa. Perhaps he expected to get into touch with a country from which great riches could be drawn. During the Empire period the ships of Egypt had made long voyages southward from the Red Sea, and there must have been traditions about these which aroused the interest and curiosity of Necho.

Herodotus tells that Necho had a fleet manned by Phœnicians fitted out at a harbour on the Red Sea, and gave orders that it should sail round Africa and return by the Strait of Gibraltar, which was known to the ancients as the "Pillars of Hercules".

The Phœnicians set sail and proceeded southward, past Somaliland and Kenya, to the coast of modern Natal. Then they voyaged to the Cape of Good Hope and, following the coast, began their return journey northward along the west coast of Africa towards the Strait of Gibraltar. From Gibraltar they sailed along the north African coast to the Delta of Egypt.

This great voyage lasted for nearly three years. After sailing south for a long distance from the Red Sea, provisions ran short, and the Phœnicians landed on the African coast. They tilled the land and sowed grain. Then they waited until the grain was fit to be cut. Having gathered in the harvest, they set sail again, continuing their voyage until their stores ran out. They must have reaped three harvests during the voyage.

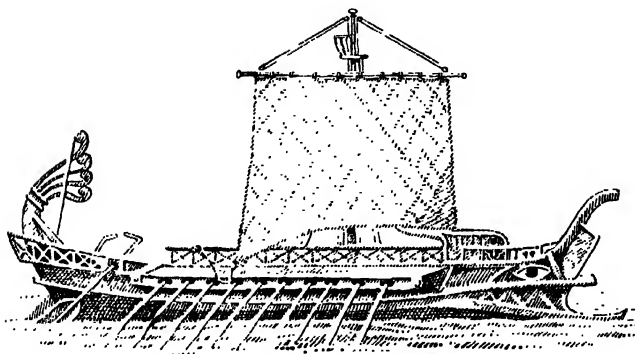
Besides growing corn to keep up their supply of bread, the sailors must also have caught fish and hunted down animals. There is no record of their having had to fight battles with the natives. It is possible that they made friends of them and gave them presents. They were accustomed to meet strange peoples and to trade with them by means of "dumb language". —

Herodotus tells how the Phœnicians of Carthage used to do business with the natives on the west coast of Africa. When the sailors arrived at their country, they landed and, having placed their goods on the shore, lit fires to raise big pillars of smoke. Then they went aboard their ships.

As soon as the natives saw the smoke they came down to the shore and examined the goods which had been left by the sailors. Then they put down as much gold as they thought the goods were worth and withdrew to a distance. The Phœnicians landed again, and if they thought the gold

offered was sufficient, they took it and sailed away. If, however, they wanted more gold than was offered, they refused to take it and went aboard their ships again and waited patiently. The natives then added more gold, and withdrew to ascertain if the strangers were satisfied.

Herodotus says that the Phœnicians and the Africans never tried to cheat or rob one another. The sailors would not touch the gold until it came up to the worth of their



Phœnician Ship

From a reconstruction in the Louvre, Paris

goods, and the natives would not touch the goods until the gold was taken away.

Perhaps the Phœnicians who sailed round Africa made bargains with the natives in this manner.

When Columbus crossed the Atlantic, the natives of the first island he reached were at first afraid of them and fled to the woods. On finding that they were not followed, they returned and made friends with the Spanish

sailors. Columbus gave them coloured caps, glass beads, little tinkling bells, and other trifles, and they were delighted with the presents. They exchanged their own ornaments of gold for any trinkets offered by the sailors, and they also brought presents of food to the Spaniards. They believed the ships came down from the sky and that the sails were wings. They were sorry when the Spaniards went away.

Some of the African tribes may have behaved towards the Phœnician explorers in much the same manner.

When the long voyage was ended, the Phœnician officers must have had wonderful stories to relate to Pharaoh Necho and his nobles regarding their adventures in strange lands.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### Jeremiah and Pharaoh Hophra

When Apries, the grandson of Pharaoh Necho, came to the throne, he had hopes of winning back Palestine and Syria from the Babylonians. He encouraged Zedekiah, king of Judah, to revolt against King Nebuchadnezzar, and he sent an army by sea to the Syrian coast. After winning a naval victory he captured Sidon, and then the city state of Tyre yielded to him. For a time Egypt became supreme in Phœnicia and also in Lebanon.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, hastened to Palestine with a strong army to deal with Zedekiah. He besieged Jerusalem, and Pharaoh Apries (whom the Hebrews called Hophra) was unable to help his ally. Jerusalem was captured and destroyed, Zedekiah was blinded and taken

prisoner, and the remnant of the Jewish nation was transported to Babylonia. There for many years the Jews were in captivity: they wept by "Babel's streams", remembering Zion.

The prophet Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah not to join the Egyptian alliance against Babylonia, but his advice was not taken. This prophet foretold the fall of the pharaoh, saying:

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy" (*Jeremiah*, chapter xlv, verse 30).

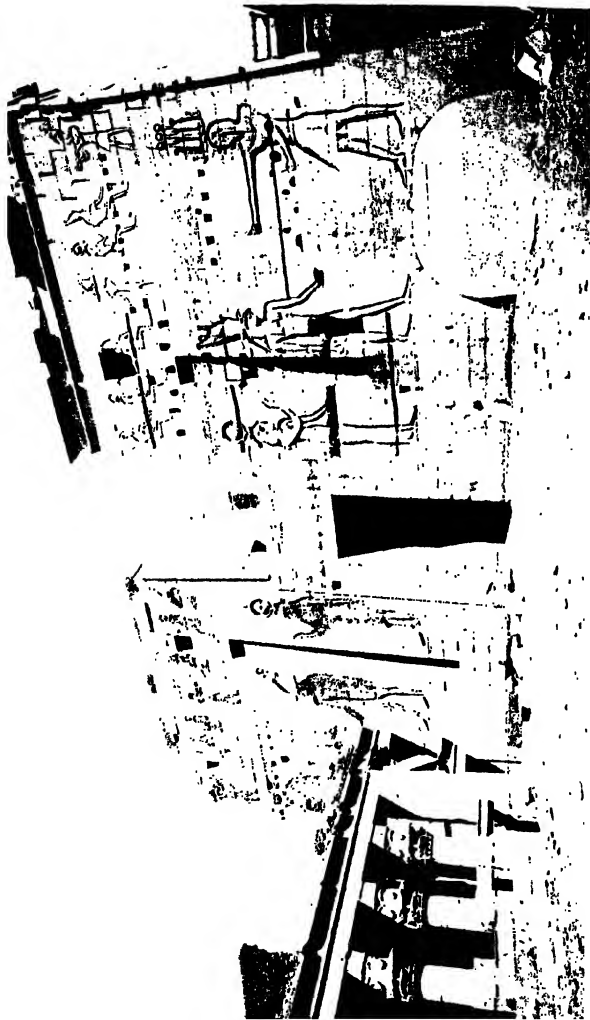
## CHAPTER XXIII

### Amasis and the Greeks

When Apries (Hophra) came to the throne, the Greeks were becoming numerous and powerful in the Delta area. Many were traders, and many were soldiers who served in the army of Egypt. Apries favoured them so much that the native Egyptians grew very angry with him.

A rebellion of the warrior class in Egypt broke out against Apries, who sent a prince named Almes to suppress it. Almes is better known by his Greek name of Amasis. He was a very able man, and when the rebellious troops asked him to be the pharaoh he accepted the honour. For about three years he and Apries reigned together. Then they quarrelled. Apries raised an army of Greeks, and Amasis put himself at the head of an army of native Egyptians. The two armies met in battle and Apries was





SECOND PYLON OF THE TEMPLE OF ISIS ON THE ISLAND OF PHILAE

The buildings on Philae were erected during the Ptolemaic Dynasty. The ruins on the island are now partially submerged owing to the raising of the Nile level.

defeated, and, after a time, was captured and put to death.

Amasis came to the throne of Egypt as a patriot, and the Egyptians hoped much from him. He did not, however, try to drive the Greeks out of Egypt, but confined them to the western part of the Delta. There the Greek city of Naucratis was founded. In it factories were built, and its manufacturers and merchants became very active. During the long reign of Amasis, which lasted for forty-four years, Naucratis grew rich and prosperous. Not only did it become a rival to Memphis, but one of the most important commercial cities of the Mediterranean. Amasis was very popular with the Greeks of Greece as well as those who lived in Naucratis.

Like other earlier pharaohs, Amasis desired to win territory in Palestine and Syria, but the Babylonians were too powerful for him. Having, however, a strong navy, he was able to control the sea trade, and he invaded and subdued the island of Cyprus.

When Amasis became an elderly man, Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, overthrew the king of the Medes and became possessed of the eastern part of the old Assyrian Empire. There was then great alarm among the other nations, and an alliance against Cyrus was formed by Egypt, Babylonia, Lydia in Asia Minor, and Sparta in Greece.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Persian Conquest of Egypt

Cyrus proved to be too powerful for the allies. He first invaded Asia Minor and defeated Crœsus, king of

Lydia, who was taken prisoner. He made Lydia a part of the Persian Empire (545 B.C.).

Cyrus sent an army against Babylonia a few years later. The city of Babylon was captured, and the rest of the country was soon subdued. Cyrus was proclaimed king of Babylonia in 538 B.C.

The western part of the Babylonian empire in Syria and Palestine at once passed into the possession of Persia. When Amasis died in 525 B.C., Cambyses, son of Cyrus, was preparing to invade Egypt with a strong Persian army.

Psamtek III succeeded Amasis as pharaoh of Egypt, but he reigned for only a few months. He could not expect to unite his country against the Persians, for the native Egyptians detested the Greeks, and would rather be ruled over by a Persian king than a pharaoh who favoured them.

When Cambyses crossed the desert of Sinai and entered Egypt, he was opposed by an army of Greek and Carian (Asia Minor) mercenaries. A battle was fought and the Persians were the victors.

Psamtek III fled to Memphis with the remnant of his army, but that city was taken by the Persians. Cambyses was willing that Psamtek should reign over Egypt as his vassal, but he found, after a time, that he was plotting with his war lords against Persia. Psamtek was then put to death.

Thereafter Cambyses had himself proclaimed pharaoh of Egypt, and he subdued the land as far south as Thebes.

The Greek writers tell that Cambyses sent an army to occupy the western oasis of Amon, but it was caught in a terrible sandstorm and every man perished.

Darius, the next Persian emperor, took a great interest in Egypt and helped to develop its trade. The Greeks lost

all their privileges at Naucratis, and Persian merchants were given advantages over them.

Darius is said to have set men to work at the canal scheme which had been given up as hopeless by Pharaoh Necho. His engineers solved the problems which had baffled the earlier pharaoh, and then ships from the Mediterranean entered the Nile and sailed through the canal to the Red Sea.

## CHAPTER XXV

### Egypt under Macedonians and Romans

When the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel dealt with the events which led to the decline of the power of the pharaohs, he foretold:

"There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I shall put a fear in the land of Egypt" (*Ezekiel*, chapter xxx, verse 13).

After the death of Psamtek III, Egypt became a province of the Persian Empire, and no native Egyptian ever ruled over it. Once or twice there were revolts which were promoted by Libyans with the aid of Greek mercenaries, but they were stamped out. The chiefs who aspired to be pharaohs were unable to win the independence of a country which was divided against itself.

In 332 B.C., after the Persians had held sway for nearly two centuries, Alexander the Great went southward through Palestine, having won victories over the Persians and their vassals, and he was welcomed in Egypt as a liberator. He founded the city of Alexandria, which was named after him,

and, in time, it became a great commercial centre and a seat of learning.

Ptolemy Soter, the Macedonian general, reigned as the king of Egypt after Alexander's death. He was the founder of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, which lasted for about three centuries. The Greek influence became gradually so powerful in Egypt that ultimately the native Egyptians who were officials adopted Greek names.

The last ruler of the Ptolemaic Dynasty was the famous Queen Cleopatra who married Antony, the Roman general. During her reign she had an obelisk removed from the city of Heliopolis and set up in Alexandria. It had been originally set up by Thothmes III, the "Napoleon" of ancient Egypt, who died about fourteen centuries before her time. The obelisk now stands on the Thames Embankment, London, and is known as "Cleopatra's needle".

When Cleopatra died Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, had entered Egypt with an army, and he took over the whole country as his personal property. It afterwards became known as "the granary of Rome", for its surplus grain was shipped to the capital of the Roman Empire.

It was during the reign of Augustus that Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with the infant Christ, and they found refuge there for a time.



Coin of Antony and Cleopatra  
From the original in the British Museum









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